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town of Esungepa is called Babingga; he has many people under him, and exercises fearful power for evil, from Romby to Malimba; and far into the interior. We saw the hemp-tree, a peculiar sort of palm, water-lilies, flowering trees of many descriptions; and a shrub like the eglantine was very common. Maize and plantains grew by the sides of the river; and near to these we saw, in many places, marks made by the numerous hippopotami in their struggles to gain the bank of the river, to feed by night on the maize and plantain leaves. The animal is here called 'Ngobó, and is killed for food by the natives. We saw many places like sheds, where slaves conceal themselves to shoot these creatures. The information we receive from the natives leads us to believe that the Jamoor is a longer river than the Cameroons, and that it is navigable for canoes for several days above Munggo. The Balum (Bakum?) people were seen as visitors or traders in one of the districts through which Brother Merrick travelled when up the Cameroons Mountain, and Ebande said he could send us safely up the river as far as the Balum (Bakum?) country, which would take about two days' paddling to reach it. This would give three days from Cameroons. Now, the Cameroons river, in its northern branch, runs but a short way above Abo, 15 hours' pull from Cameroons, and, in its south-eastern branch, a little way above Wuri, about two days' paddling from King Bell's town. The Jibbari and Bombarri people are at a very short distance from Cameroons.

XIV.—*Route from Ghát to Tawát, direct W., through the heart of the Great Desert or Sahára.** Communicated by Mr. JAMES RICHARDSON.

THIS is a route of the Great Desert which never yet has been travelled by the foot of Europeans or Christians. It passes, as stated above, direct W. through the heart of the Great Desert, consisting of 30 days' journey at a quick rate, and of 40 days at the ordinary rate of caravan travelling. I am indebted for the information concerning its wells and stations, their respective distances, and its general geological features, to a Tawát Moor (assisted by a Sherif of Ghát), whose acquaintance I made at that oasis, and who periodically travels this route, under a safe-conduct of Ṭawárik,† for the purposes of commerce. This is now not

* Sahrá, in the plural Sahára, signifies a desert level or plain.—F. S.

† Ṭawárik is the plural of Tárikah or Tārikah, the name of a Berber tribe, spelt by Leo Africanus (p. 630), Targa; k is commonly pronounced as g in get, gain, by the Western Arabs and Berbers: hence Bruce called himself Yagoubi e Ya'kúb.—F. S.

only the route of a considerable commerce between the western and eastern regions of the *Ṣahára*, but also that by which goods are conveyed from *Súdán* to *Timbuktú*, those along the banks of the *Niger* being more insecure, if not impracticable. Now and then, a few solitary travellers make their way on the banks and on the tributaries to the *Niger*, but hundreds of camel-loads of blue and black glazed cotton goods are brought this way *viâ* *A'hir*,* *Ghát* and *Sorat*, although making a circuit of some four months' journey, while that by the *Niger* is scarcely a month—a proof of how great must be the danger of the routes on the *Niger*. But even this route by the Great Desert is by no means a perfectly safe one, being at times infested by the *Shānbats*† and *Tawárikí* Berbers. Of course no European could travel this route unless under the protection of, and accompanied by, a powerful *Tawárik* *Sheikh*. I shall mention more at large the geological features of the route, after having enumerated the stations and the wells from the oasis of *Ghát* to that of *Tawát*.

1st Station, *Feiwát*.—One day's journey. A small oasis with many wells. A little sand, but mostly rocky ground. For 12 days, indeed, the route from *Ghát* to *Tawát* is rocky; masses and groups of rocks and mountainous ridges, and some of the mountains are of great altitudes, at the base of which gush forth innumerable streams, as if touched by the rod of *Moses*; often joining together and forming perennial streams in the heart of this great thirsty wilderness. Many *Tawárikí* families are located at this station.

2nd, *Eidú*.—Two days and a half. The Arabs frequently speak of the distances, “two days and arrive on the *third* day;” or “three days and arrive on the *fourth* day;” that is, two days and a half, or three days and a half, or thereabouts. A running stream both in summer and winter, rocky country, and high mountains. Abundant small herbage for camels.

3rd, *Aghákanēirá*.—Two days. A perennial stream at the base of lofty mountains. A district densely populated by *Tawarik*.

4th, *Asjaneüwan*.‡—Two days. A continuous stream, as in the foregoing station. A great quantity of herbage, but no trees. All inhabited; flocks and droves of camels.

5th, *Zarzúwah*.—Running streams and country, as the preceding. One day's journey.

* In the maps *Haír*, *qu*, *Kábir* of *Ibn Batúta*, p. 242.—F. S.

† The *Shanbats* are a robber tribe of Arabs of *Wárkla* [*Idrisí* by *Jaubert*, i. 255; *Leo Africanus*, *Africa*, *Guarghela*, p. 9; *Guargala*, p. 620; *Wurglah*, *Shaw's Travels*, pp. 67, 68] in the S. of *Algeria*, near *Súf*. They are nominally under the French. In the past year they were in open war with the *Tawárik* of *Ghát*.

‡ The *Tawárik* pronounce all words beginning with an *a* or *aleph* as if they began with a *y*. But I have generally preserved the correct spelling.

6th, *Tarseit*.—Two days. Many wells at the base of high mountains. District not inhabited, but visited at all times by Tawárik for watering their flocks.

7th, *Afará*.—One day and a half. Springs. Tawárik population with flocks and camels. Tents and *hashésh* or “herbage” houses. These houses are mostly of a round form, with a sort of court-yard surrounding them fenced with the same material. At Ghát these *hashésh* houses are made of palm-branches.

8th, *Halkam*.—Three days and a half. Sand, and water under it, but *brackish*. It frequently happens in the Great Desert that the water under the surface of sand is *salt*, though there are many exceptions. This is a rendezvous of numerous troops of banditti, but of the Tawárik of Tawát and Timbuktú, whose nominal sovereign is Bossa. Hereabouts begin the districts of these Tawárik or those of *Hakkar*, the Tawárik of Ghát being called *Azkár*.* The Ghat Tawárik are much more polite in their manners, and more acquainted with Christians, than those of Tawát and Timbuktú. But the Tawárik of Ahir and Aghades [Aúdaghost] are equally affable with those of Ghát, and as soft in their manners as the inhabitants of Súdán, whose territories join, and are thus mutually influenced.

9th, *Teikarat*.—Four days. A large stream or river of perpetually running water. District thickly inhabited by Tawárik, and numerous flocks and herds of camels. Large trees and abundant herbage.

10th, *Intafúsa*.—One day. A well in a valley sometimes visited by Tawárik shepherds and herdsmen. This is the site of a great number of remarkable ancient tombs, of most rude construction, some being only large piles of stones; showing, that a considerable population was once located in this place.

11th, *Amkeidah*.—Three days. One large and inexhaustible spring. Many Tawárik located about, but nevertheless frequented by Tawárikí and Shanbat banditti. Sand mountains in vast groups and masses to the W., and a deep broad valley in the E., from whose desert bosom a fine spring of water gushes forth. Herbage in abundance.

12th, *Amhágh*.—Two days. A well, ridges of mountains, and a few Tawárik inhabitants.

13th, *Ghárás*.—Two days. A well at the foot of lofty mountains, situate in a broad valley, and around abundance of herbage and shrubs.

* The *Azkár*, Tawárik, or those of Ghát, have Shafú for their present sultan; the *Hakkar*, or those of Tawát, are under Bossa, a man of gigantic stature. *Azkár* is commonly pronounced *Azgér*, & having frequently the sound of *é* in Barbary: hence the Spaniards spell *Fás*, *Fez*.—F. S.

14th, *Tuwankaneî*.—One day. Several wells in a valley, and flocks and herds of camels feeding.

15th, *Amsarah*.—Two days and a half. A well and a little sand scattered around.

16th, *Abadaghâh*.—Two days and a half. An immense spring of water, besides two other wells. Two or three date-palms, and herbage of all kinds thick and abounding. In the neighbouring heights palms and vines flourish. But few inhabitants.

17th, *Tuwanghakân*.—Two days. Many wells, palm-woods and herbage in abundance, but no inhabitants. This is the first country of Tawât, which consists of an almost innumerable congregated group of small oases, like so many islets in the Pacific, besides two or three large towns. Country undulating.

18th, *Ghâbah*.—Two days and a half. Many wells and herbage. The country a vast expanse of plains. No inhabitants.

19th, *'Ain Salâh*.—One day. A town and principal district of Tawât, consisting of small villages and scattered houses. The soil is mostly sandy; sand hillocks and flat earthy surface. Here are forests of date-palms, all sorts of grain, flocks of sheep and goats, horses and camels, but no bullocks. The inhabitants are precisely of the same character as those of the town and oasis of Ghât, Moors, or a mongrel race of Arabs, Tawâriḳ, and Negroes, and dress in the same way, with the black cotton turbans or head-wrapper covering the forehead and all the lower part of the face. This style of wrapping up the head has been borrowed from the singular and immemorial customs of the Tawâriḳ.

The geological features of this route across the second* region of the *Ṣahâra* are a remarkable contradiction of the vulgar error of representing the Great Desert to be "*an ocean of sand*," moving and tossed into billows by every wind which sweeps its desolate bosom, for we here find masses and groups of rocks covering almost the entire route, and ranges of mountains bounding it in all directions. In one place only is there a range or group of sand-hills. The water is most abundant, and generally good. The wells also are at no great distance from each other, the longest distance of a station not being more than four short days. Indeed, a Tawâriḳî mounted upon his swift-footed *Mahriḱ*†

* The author says "central region" of the *Ṣahrá*; this, however, is a mistake. Leo, who well knew that country, has pointed out its natural divisions very accurately. 1. The Maritime Region, he says (pp. 4, 8), is Barbary. 2. Next to it is Numidia, or Bilâdu-l-jeṛid (in our older maps Biledulgerid), *i. e.* the land of dates. 3. Libya, called by the Arabs *Sahrâ* (Sarra, p. 5), extending westwards from El Wâhât (Eloacatum, p. 6) to the ocean; and, lastly, El Súdân, the land of the Negroes (p. 6).—F. S.

† The spelling and origin of this word are doubtful. It is probably Berber and not Arabic. Hôst (Marôkos, p. 249) spells it Meherî, and says it is equivalent to the Turkish (he meant Arabic) *Hajîn*; *hajân* (hajén in Barbary) also signifies a very swift camel or dromedary. It is called *heiriyah* by Mr. Jackson (Marocco, p. 39). The word appears to be unknown to the Arabs.—F. S.

would go over this ground in less than two days. There is likewise frequent rain in this route, owing probably to the height and character of the mountains, which attract the clouds and condense them into rain. Frequently storms of wind and clouds burthened with rain pass over the Great Desert, but the flat bare surface and low ridges of mountains present no sufficient objects to attract the clouds and bring down the waters upon the thirsty bosom of the earth. These mountainous districts also greatly modify the heat, and I am told by Moors who have traversed them that it is positively *cold* the greater part of the year, that is to say, *it is not burning hot as in other parts of the desert*. However, it does not appear, owing to the rocky soil, that cultivation is at all considerable. The springs furnish man and his flocks and herds with water, and the rains and dews cause abundant herbage to break forth through the interstices of the rocky ground and to cover the face of the valleys; but there is little clear or good soil for the cultivation of corn except on the banks of one or two of the larger streams. Near Ghát there are seven streams, on the banks of which corn is cultivated.

The Moors pretend that coals are found in this route, but were coals ever so abundant they could never pay the expense of carriage to the coast. Of other minerals I have heard nothing.

Should this be published, it might serve as a rough outline for any European traveller who should have courage enough to undertake the perilous journey.

* See Clapperton's Travels, p. 14.—F. S.
